A

LETTER

TO A

BISHOP,

Concerning Some

Important Discoveries

IN

PHILOSOPHY and THEOLOGY.

LONDON:

Printed by H. WOODFALL; and Sold by A. DODD, [illegible]
the *Peacock* without *Temple-Bar*. 1732.

(Price One Shilling.)

MVSEVM
BRITAN
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MY LORD,

ATHEISM, Deiſm, and the whole train of Opinions that attend what is commonly called Free-thinking, flow from a ſettled Disbelief and Contempt of Revelation.

This Disbelief is in a great meaſure owing to the want of a fair and unprejudiced Examination of the numerous and various Proofs and Evidences, that ſupport the Truth and Authority of the Scriptures.

But it is chiefly grounded on a firm Perſuaſion, that human Underſtanding is a ſufficient Guide to Man, and the teſt and meaſure of all matters of Belief; ſo that we are at liberty, nay indeed bound, to reject whatever does not anſwer thoſe Notions, which, by what we call Reaſoning, we have fixed.

That modern Diſcoveries, the Fruit of Genius and Application only, have fixed and determin'd to a certainty the Laws and Cauſes of the principal Operations, and Phenomena of Nature, which were wholly unknown to the

Antients, and miſtaken by the Authors of the Books which are receiv'd as Revelation.

That therefore theſe Books, ſo far as they give accounts of Nature, contrary to Experience, and Demonſtration reſulting from it, are falſe; and conſequently can, in no other point, paſs for infallible.

That the Scriptures relate a great many marvellous, improbable, nay incredible Tranſactions, which do not ſeem to be directed to any purpoſe, ſuited to ſovereign Wiſdom and Goodneſs; and to contain a world of Inſtitutions, Laws, Obſervances and Ceremonies, which to Freethinkers appear abſurd, frivolous, and ridiculous; unworthy the ſuppoſed Author, and improper to attain the propoſed End.

When any apparent miſtake in Natural Philoſophy is objected to the Scriptures, the Anſwer commonly given is, in my opinion, ſtronger than the Objection, according to the views of the Diſputants on either ſide; that theſe Things, being incidental only, are ſpoken *ad captum humanum*, and accommodated to the Underſtandings of thoſe, to whom they were deliver'd; tho', I confeſs, it wou'd be a much more comfortable Anſwer, if it cou'd be ſaid, and prov'd, that the Things objected to are true.

When Freethinkers ground themſelves upon any improbable, or, as they will call it, incredible or abſurd Relation, there is no anſwering them without bringing together, and laying before them, the whole Evidence that ſerves for ſupporting Revelation; which, when poiſed in the ſcale againſt all Objections of this kind that ever have been made, in my opinion, may certainly outweigh them: but, the misfortune is, the Objection glares, can be

be taken in by a very moderate Capacity, and requires no Learning, and but little Attention to comprehend it; whereas, without long Study, great Learning, cloſe Attention, and a diſpaſſionate and unprejudic'd Examination, the Evidence for Revelation cannot be collected and weighed. Whoever therefore lets in the Strength of the Objection, and, for want of Learning or Attention (not to ſpeak of natural Prejudices) either cannot, or will not give himſelf the trouble to collect and weigh the Proofs on the other ſide, muſt neceſſarily give it againſt Revelation, and fortify himſelf in his Incredulity.

And to this it is owing that all thoſe, who, in this indolent and luxurious Age, pretend to Politeneſs, and aim at Knowledge, and the Reputation of Underſtanding and Science, without any expence of Learning or Labour, and without any interruption to their Pleaſures or Purſuits, take up with Objections againſt Revelation, without the painful Examination of the Evidence that ſupports it; look down with Contempt on Believers, as a parcel of prejudiced Enthuſiaſts, and inliſt themſelves with Freethinkers, as the honeſteſt, wiſeſt Set of Men living.

And when Men, carried by Pleaſures, or ſunk in Indolence, ſettle once upon theſe Notions, every Inſtitution, Ordinance, or Ceremony appointed in Scripture, for which Chriſtians cannot, or do not, aſſign an adequate Uſe or End, becomes freſh matter of objection, and tends to rivet and confirm Infidelity.

This facility of receiving and taking up with Objections, and the criminal Indolence and Neglect of thoſe who do not give themſelves the trouble to examine, with due care, the Merits of the Anſwer, has been long com-

plain'd of, and lamented by all who wiſh well to Mankind, but hitherto in vain; ſomething more than Argument muſt intervene to cool them in the purſuit of Pleaſures, to rouſe their Attention to their real Intereſt, and to determine them to ſearch with Care and Induſtry; before they will let in ſo much as a ſuſpicion that their Objections are ill-founded; or thoſe Objections muſt be overthrown by ſome other and ſhorter Mean than the complicated Evidence for the Authority of Revelation, elſe the Objectors will never give themſelves the trouble to diſcover their miſtakes.

Some time ago, as my Thoughts were employed in theſe diſagreeable Reflections, a Set of Books were ſent me by my Bookſeller to look over; the Titles were odd, and provoked my Curioſity: *Moſes's Principia, parts 1ſt and 2d*; *An Eſſay toward a Natural Hiſtory of the Bible*; *Moſes's—ſine Principio*; *A new Account of the Confuſion of Tongues, and the Names and Attributes of the Trinity of the Gentiles*; were inſcribed at the head of theſe ſeveral Tracts, all publiſh'd ſucceſſively, in different Years, from the Year 1724: And theſe are follow'd by another Work, that was publiſh'd very lately, entitled, *A Treatiſe of Power, Eſſential and Mechanical.*

Running over theſe Books curſorily, I readily perceiv'd the Author propos'd to prove that the Hebrew Scriptures had never been, and are not now, truly tranſlated; or perfectly underſtood by thoſe who pretend to be learned; that, rightly tranſlated and underſtood, they compriſe a perfect Syſtem of Natural Philoſophy, as well as a compleat Body of Theology and Religion; that they no where aſſert any of thoſe Heterodoxes in Philoſophy, which

which modern Obſervation ſhew to be ſuch; but, on the contrary, teach and aver every thing that has been truly gather'd from Obſervations or Experiments, recent or antient; and propoſe, and explain mechanical Principles different from, nay in many things diametrically oppoſite to, thoſe now receiv'd; by which all the various Operations in Nature are perform'd, and which tally with, and can be ſupported by, every Obſervation and Experiment that hath been truly taken or made: that the ſeeming Abſurdities, with which the Scriptures are charged, either are not in the original, and are therefore owing to the Ignorance or perverſe Deſign of the Tranſlators; or are, when rightly underſtood, no Blemiſhes, but Beauties in the Revelation; and that the many Inſtitutions, Declarations and Obſervances, which appear frivolous to thoſe who do not underſtand them, are the product of perfect Wiſdom and Contrivance, neceſſary to explain and preſerve the Religion inculcated in the Old Teſtament, and fit to prepare for that which afterwards was deliver'd in the New.

But though I eaſily gather'd this to be the Author's Propoſal and Intention; yet, upon looking into particulars, I found the proofs depended ſo much on the true Conſtruction of the Hebrew Language, to which I was very much a Stranger; and on an exact Knowledge of the Experiments and Obſervations that have been made on the Works of Nature, with which I am but very little acquainted; that his Reaſoning, almoſt every where, appear'd to me intricate and arbitrary; and I was not without ſome doubts that the Obſcurity I complain'd of

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proceeded partly from deſign, for reaſons that I cou'd not penetrate.

Finding, from my own want of Knowledge, ſuch difficulty in examining the Proofs offer'd to ſupport Propoſitions of ſuch univerſal import to Mankind, and which I wiſh'd ſo earneſtly to diſcover to be concluſive and true; I reſorted to ſeveral learned Men of my Acquaintance, skill'd in the antient Language, on which the Author grounds himſelf; and converſant in the Obſervations and Experiments, on which the modern Philoſophy of Nature is built, not doubting but they had conſider'd, and framed a certain Judgment of his Works: but, to my great ſurpriſe, tho' all of them had heard of, and ſeen ſome part of thoſe Tracts, yet not one of them had given himſelf the trouble to examine them. They complain'd of the Intricacy and Abſtruſeneſs of the Author's way of writing, and concluded him ſo, certainly, to be half-learn'd, viſionary, and in the wrong, becauſe his Notions were contradictory to what they, by long Study, had adopted and made their own; that they laid aſide his Books without any farther Enquiry, as what did not deſerve, or wou'd not anſwer the trouble of an Examination.

Tho' I cou'd have relied on theſe Gentlemen's Judgment, if they had conſider'd the Author's Opinions and Arguments with any care; yet finding that they had cenſur'd without Examination, and not being able to meet with any Perſon whatever, who had given himſelf the trouble of canvaſſing with due Attention his Arguments, on a matter of ſo general concern; I rubb'd up the little Hebrew I had, and addreſs'd myſelf to a more careful Peruſal of the Books; not with any hopes of being

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able finally to judge of the Certainty of his ſuppos'd Diſcoveries, but with a deſign to collect the general Drift and Tendency of his Reaſoning, to the end I might lay it before thoſe who are infinitely better able to judge than my ſelf; and who, from ſeeing ſcatter'd Hints brought together, might be invited to conſider the matter more ſeriouſly; to condemn and refute any thing that is falſe, and to approve, ſupport and propagate every thing that is true. For I cannot help thinking it ſome reproach to the Curioſity, as well as religious Zeal of the Clergy of this Nation, that Sentiments ſo new and ſurpriſing, in matters of Religion, ſhou'd have been ſtalking about for ſo many Years, without meeting with any Examination, Approbation, or Confutation.

To give your Lordſhip, then, from whoſe great Proficiency in the Eaſtern Learning, the only Foundation of Scripture-Knowledge; and your thorough Knowledge of natural Things from whence all Ideas of Beings and Things inviſible are convey'd; your known Readineſs to forward any Work in favour of Religion; eſpecially a Work of this kind to eſtabliſh the true Meaning of the Scriptures much wanted, I expect a Solution of my Doubts; an account of theſe things that have made the greateſt Impreſſion on me, in the order in which I have been able to comprehend them.

The Author affirms (what I think moſt of the learned World, at preſent, agree in) that pointing in the Hebrew Writings is a modern Invention, ſome Centuries later than the Days of our Saviour, contriv'd after the Language ceas'd to be commonly ſpoken by the Jews, to favour their own Conſtructions, and therefore of no Authority

to determine the ſenſe of any Word, but for that Reaſon to be avoided.

That as the Underſtanding, ſo the proper and original Senſe of many of the Hebrew Words us'd to expreſs matters of Importance in Philoſophy and Theology, was, in ſome degree, alter'd or loſt, when the Children of Iſrael made Defections from the true Religion, before the Babyloniſh Captivity; ſo in the Diſperſion that attended that Captivity, the pure Hebrew was altogether beat out of common Uſage, and the Knowledge of it remain'd only amongſt the few that were learn'd, and attentive to the true Religion and Philoſophy that was deliver'd by Moſes, and the other inſpired Writers.

That the Greek Tranſlation, commonly called the Septuagint, being made long after the Return from the Babyloniſh Captivity, when the genuine Senſe of the Hebrew Words was, in a great meaſure, loſt, is extremely imperfect; partly as the Greek Language is deſtitute of Words to convey the full and proper meaning of the Hebrew Expreſſions; partly as the Tranſlators might have been ignorant, and might have accommodated their Interpretation to their own Views, in Philoſophy and Theology which were corrupted; and partly as they durſt not (had their Underſtanding been better) tranſlate, in ſome points truly, for fear of provoking the Egyptians, in whoſe Country they compos'd their Tranſlation; and whoſe Gods, had they given a faithful Tranſlation, they muſt to the laſt degree vilify and affront.

That, nevertheleſs, this and other Tranſlations ſo fully diſcover the Genius of the Hebrew Language, and ſo cer-

certainly tranſlate Words, when employ'd about matters that the Interpreters were under no byaſs to render falſly, that a Key from thence may be made for conſtruing, with certainty, the whole Hebrew Scriptures.

The Author avers that the Hebrew Language (from which, it ſeems pretty certain, the Phenician, the Chaldee, the Syriack, the Arabick, the Greek, the Latin, and divers other Branches were deriv'd) was the original one; framed in Paradiſe, and with this particularity, that each Root is taken from ſome particular Beaſt, Bird, Plant, Flower, or ſome other ſenſible Object, and employ'd to repreſent ſome very obvious Idea of Action or Condition rais'd by ſuch ſenſible Object, from whence it is further carried to ſignify ſpiritual or mental things, of which we can frame Ideas only by the help of material or bodily things.

He denies that any one Root in the whole Language conveys Ideas of a different meaning; and affirms that one, and but one, leading Senſe runs through all the formation of the ſame Root; contrary to the eſtabliſh'd Doctrine of the Jews, who by variety of arbitrary Pointings, aſcribe different, and contradictory Senſes very often to a Word compos'd of the very ſame Letters; with deſign, as our Author ſuggeſts, to darken the Senſe of the Scriptures chiefly, if not altogether, in thoſe points, which contain the Knowledge of the Chriſtian Syſtem, and the Religion of the Heathens.

After obſerving that there is not one Line of authentick Hebrew, left in the whole World, but what is compris'd in the Books of the Old Teſtament, our Author inſiſts that there is one, and but one, certain way of decy-

phering it, that is, by comparing every Word in all the various Combinations and Sentences in which it appears, and gathering from thence the leading or original Idea it was intended to raiſe; which is ever, from ſuch Compariſon, with certainty to be collected.

He ſays, that tho' all the modern Hebrecians had the uſe of very accurate Concordances, that might have help'd them forward in this Inveſtigation, yet their Progreſs was marr'd by the blind reſpect they paid to the falſe or fraudulent Pointings of their Adverſaries the Jews; and that he, ſhaking himſelf looſe from thoſe Fetters, has been able to ſettle the genuine Meaning of every important Word in the whole Old Teſtament.

And from the fix'd and perpetual Meaning of the Words ſo explain'd, he ſays he is able to ſhew that the Scriptures, however diſguiſed and disfigured by the Tranſlation, are written with the utmoſt Accuracy, Propriety, and Truth; that they contain a perfect Syſtem of Natural Philoſophy, and, upon that grafted, a compleat Syſtem of Theology, ſo far as Mankind is capable of receiving that ſublime Knowledge, and unerring Rules for all religious Service and Belief.

Through the whole of his Works he attempts to define, and determine the true Senſe of a great many Words us'd by *Moſes* and the Prophets, in the Deſcription of the Formation of the World, and the Preſervation and Support of all the Operations that are carried on in it; he avers that the Deſcriptions, by them given in theſe Words, contain a mechanical Account of all the Powers, and of the Operations carried on in, and by this material Syſtem;

and

and he inſiſts that all the Phenomena in Nature can be accounted for by the Principles laid down by them.

But to give you as clear a view, as I am able, of the further Deſign of our Author; He ſuppoſes it will not be denied to him; that Man, a compound of Soul and Body, cannot frame to himſelf, or compare Ideas, but ſuch as are taken from ſenſible Objects: What Powers or Faculties the Soul might have, if detached from the Body, we cannot know; but as we are now made, we upon moderate Reflection diſcover, that the Soul of Man, in this State, has not power to frame to itſelf, or to receive any Idea that does not come from the Senſes, at leaſt from ſome Feeling or Senſation communicated to it by, or through the Body.

The Sun, the Light, the Air, the Earth, the Body of Man we can frame Ideas of, as we can of the manner of their acting, and being acted upon; but the Soul which perceives and compares thoſe Ideas we can frame no manner of Idea of, nor of it's manner of acting, or being acted upon.

And we, who know that we have no Capacity to conceive any Idea of any thing that does not affect our Senſes, muſt conclude that our not perceiving is no Proof that there may not be Millions of different Beings and Subſtances round us, beſides thoſe that affect our Senſes, of which, and of their Powers or Actions, we can know nothing.

As Man has not the leaſt Idea of the Matter or Subſtance of his own Soul, or of it's manner of acting, or being acted upon; ſo he has no Capacity of Reaſoning about it, by comparing it with things perceiv'd: he

 cannot,

cannot, for example, compare it with Space, or Figure; he cannot ſay it is, or is not, comprehended within Limits of any kind; he cannot ſay it moves, or does not move, or at all imagine how it is ſupported, or acts.

We perceive how a ſolid Body is moved by the impulſe of another ſolid Body, or of a Fluid, and is continued in motion ſo long as the Impulſe laſts; and we can conceive how a Plant, or Animal may be ſupported, may grow, or decay, mechanically, by the Operation of different material Agents; but we can have no Conception how the Soul acts on itſelf, or on Matter, how it is acted upon, or how it is ſupported.

And being ſo much in the dark concerning the principal part of our ſelves, the only knowing thing in us, it is no wonder we ſhou'd be incapable of framing any juſt Idea of that inviſible ſpiritual Being, by which we, and every other created thing, were made.

Our Author thinks that by the Light of Nature only, Men could not poſſibly have diſcover'd whether this material Syſtem, which, he ſays, is ſo framed as to be a ſelf-moving Machine, exiſted from Eternity, and was the cauſe and ſupport of itſelf, and of every thing in it; or whether it was contrived, and the parts of it put together by an higher Hand. But be that as it will, and were it even to be ſuppos'd that Man, by thorough Obſervation, and by a juſt Induction cou'd diſcover *à poſteriori* the Exiſtence of ſome eternal ſelf-exiſtent Cauſe, whoſe Work this Creation is; our Author ſeems to be well warranted, when he affirms that it is preſumptuous in Man, becauſe it is impoſſible, to frame ſuch an Idea of this inviſible Agent, from his own ſcanty Notions and Apprehenſions,

henſions, as ſhall be the ſtandard and teſt, by which to try every thing that is, or may be, in queſtion concerning the firſt Cauſe.

Man may, for example, be in the right to attribute all poſſible Perfections to this Being, but 'till he can determine what is abſolute Perfection (taking in the Circle of all poſſible Beings, their Actions and Attributes) it is impoſſible for him with juſtice to conclude, that becauſe this or that ſeems to him to be Perfection, it therefore, according to the meaſure which he conceives of it, belongs to the Author of Nature.

And tho' it ſhou'd be admitted that Man, by the Light of Nature, cou'd diſcover the Dependence of this created Syſtem, on a ſelf-exiſtent Creator, yet it is certain he cannot frame to himſelf any Idea of that Being, his Nature, Subſtance, Powers, or Manner of Exiſting or Acting; and that if there is any Knowledge of ſuch things amongſt Men, it muſt come from ſome other ſource than that of Nature and Obſervation.

From this ſtate of Man's Nature the Author infers one indiſpenſible Neceſſity for Revelation; if God intended that Man ſhou'd know him, his Goodneſs, Power, Wiſdom, and Mercy; ſhou'd make returns of Gratitude, Love, Adoration, and Obedience; and ſhou'd conform himſelf to that Order, which by the divine Will was eſtabliſhed: and that the Knowledge of every thing that was to be known, and believ'd, was reveal'd, our Author inſiſts will demonſtrably be proved, when what is revealed, is underſtood and conſider'd.

A Revelation therefore, our Author inſiſts, was made by God to Man, at two different periods; the firſt juſt

after the Creation, and upon the Fall; the ſecond in the Wilderneſs to the Iſraelites, and on various occaſions afterwards, by different methods of Communication, not to mention the Appearances to the Patriarchs: To reſtore the Knowledge of the firſt Revelation, which had been pretty much loſt, or miſunderſtood, and to fix and aſcertain it by writing (a Method, as the Author will have it, then firſt reveal'd) ſo as it ſhou'd never after be obliterated or left dubious.

To begin with the laſt. The firſt thing that is met with in the Books of *Moſes* is an Aſſertion that God created the Heavens and the Earth, which is followed by a particular Account of the Order and Manner of the Formation of all that was created, 'till the Work was perfected. After which, God is ſaid to have reſted; and our Author aſſerts that it is alſo ſaid, the perfect Machine, then left to it's ſelf, carried on all the Operations in this Syſtem, by certain known Laws of Mechaniſm, explain'd by *Moſes*, and throughout the Scriptures by the other inſpired Penmen.

The Sum of what our Author avers to be the Doctrine of the Scriptures, on this head, is, that beſides the differently formed Particles, of which this Earth, and the ſeveral Metals, Minerals, and other ſolid Subſtances in it, and in the other ſolid Orbs are compoſed, God at firſt created all that ſubtile Fluid which now is, and from the Creation has been, in the condition of Fire, Light, or Air, and goes under the name of the Heavens.

The Particles of this Fluid (which our Author calls Atoms) when they are ſingle and uncompounded, are inconceivably minute, and ſo ſubtile as to pervade the

Pores

Pores of all Subſtances whatever, whether ſolid, or fluid, without any great difficulty or reſiſtance: when they are puſh'd forward in ſtreight Lines by the Action of Fire, or are reflected or refracted in ſtreight Lines, they produce Light, and are ſo call'd; but when the Interpoſition of any opaque Body hinders their progreſs in ſtreight Lines they paſs, but ceaſe to produce Light.

Theſe Particles or Atoms which, when moving in ſtreight Lines, produce Light; and if collected and put into another ſort of Motion, wou'd produce Heat and Fire, are, as our Author inſiſts, when the Force impelling them ceaſes to act with vigour, and when their Motion is retarded, ſo made, that they are apt to adhere in ſmall Maſſes or Grains, which the Author calls Spirit or Air; and is of the ſame kind and texture with that Air, which we daily breathe, and which we feel in Wind when it blows.

The Sun, which our Author places at the Centre of this Syſtem, is an Orb included in a vaſt Collection of this ſubtile Matter in the Action of Fire, which continually melts down all the Air that is brought into it by the powerful Action of the Firmament or Expanſion, hereafter to be explain'd, into the ſubtile Matter juſt mention'd; and with an immenſe force ſends forth, in perpetual Streams of Light, this ſame ſubtile Matter ſo melted down, to the Circumference of this Syſtem, which the Author ſays is bounded, as he avers the Space comprehended within it is abſolutely full.

The Matter thus melted down at the Orb of the Sun into Light muſt, as every thing is full, either ſtand ſtill, or make it's way outwards to the Circumference, being forced

forced by the Particles, which are concreted into Air at the utmoſt Extremities; and return towards the Sun, where the Fluid being moſt ſubtile gives leaſt Reſiſtance, and takes up the place that the Light left.

And therefore this endleſs uninterrupted Flux of Matter from the Sun in Light, in place of being an expence that ſhou'd deſtroy that Orb (which our Author takes to be an inſupportable Objection to Sir *Iſaac Newton*'s Scheme) is the very means of preſerving it, and every thing elſe in this Syſtem in it's Action and Vigour, by preſſing back perpetual Supplies of Air to be melted down into Light, and thereby produces a continual Circulation. Theſe perpetual Fluxes or Tides of Matter outwards and inwards, in every point, from the Centre to the Circumference mechanically, and neceſſarily, as our Author inſiſts, produce that conſtant Gyration in the Earth and the Planets round their own Centres, and round the Sun; and he avers, tho' he has not yet thought fit to explain it, that the ſame Principle, with ſome Circumſtances, ariſing from the Situation and Fluxes of Light coming from the other Orbs, will account alſo for the Motions of the Moon.

Beſides the Rotation of the Orbs, the Author affirms that the adverſe Motions of the Light puſhing towards the Circumference, and the Air puſhing towards the Centre with immenſe force, forms a general Expanſion (as he tranſlates the Word render'd Firmament) which brings that ſtreſs or compreſſure on all Bodies it meets with, that binds together Solids, keeps Fluids as they were, cauſes the variation of Times and Seaſons, the raiſing of Water, the Production of Vegetables and Animals, and

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in ſhort produces all the effects falſly aſcrib'd to Gravity or Attraction; continues Motion without the Aſſiſtance of the unmechanical Principle of Projection; produces, ſupplies, and ſupports Vegetables, Fruits, and Animals; in ſhort produces almoſt all the Effects and Phenomena in Nature.

Theſe are ſome of the Out-lines of our Author's Philoſophy, very repugnant, indeed, to the Notions commonly receiv'd; but the Authorities, by which he avers he can ſupport them are two, and they are pretty conſiderable.

Firſt, He ſays that *Moſes* and the Prophets, who, by divine Authority, were to reveal and explain to Mankind how the Operations in this Syſtem were carried on, have in plain terms ſaid ſo. And

Secondly, He affirms that he can by comparing every true Obſervation and Experiment that have at any time been made by the Royal Society, or its Members, or by any foreign Societies of learned Men; and by a great many Obſervations and Experiments made by himſelf, to which the Curious have hitherto very little attended, with the Syſtem of Philoſophy reveal'd in the Scriptures; ſhew that all the various Phenomena of Nature are to be accounted for mechanically thereby; and that the modern Syſtems, as well as all others not taken from the Scriptures, are falſe, abſurd, and unmechanical.

It is becauſe this looks highly improbable, if not impoſſible, to moſt Men, that an Examination of our Author's Notions are neglected; but as, in proportion as it is improbable, it wou'd confirm the Scriptures, ſhou'd it be found true; I confeſs my deſire is the greater that the Men, qualified to judge, wou'd examine it.

As it is extremely new, ſo, at firſt ſight, it ſeems odd that our Author ſhou'd ſuppoſe it neceſſary for the Creator to give to Mankind a Courſe of Philoſophy, ſo to ſpeak; but to remove this Difficulty he reaſons to this effect.

The end to which a rational diſcerning Soul was given to Man, was, that by the Organs of the Body he might perceive the Beauty, the Order, the Harmony of Nature; and thence receive Ideas of the infinite Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs of it's Author, which ſhou'd lead to Admiration, Love, Duty, Dependance, Adoration, Acknowledgment, and a Deſire of further Knowledge, and Viſion of what in this World Man can take in by borrow'd Ideas only.

If the Mechaniſm of Nature had not been reveal'd to Man, he poſſibly never wou'd have diſcover'd it to any certainty; at leaſt, wou'd not have diſcover'd it, for ages: and ſo long thoſe Incentives to Admiration, Love, Service, and Adoration wou'd have been wanting.

If the Mechaniſm cou'd have been underſtood, without the further Diſcovery that this ſelf-moving Machine is no more than an inanimate piece of Clock-work created, as well as put together, by the ſupreme, intelligent, beneficent Being, it might have led Man to place his Admiration and Worſhip on the Machine, in place of him that made it, as the miſtaken part of Mankind always did.

And therefore if before Mankind cou'd know the Obligations he had to the ſupreme intelligent Being as his Redeemer, that is, before the Fall; the ſole Light he cou'd view him in, to produce Admiration, Love, Duty, Service, and deſire of further Union, was that of the in-

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finitely wiſe, powerful, and beneficent Creator, and Supporter; it ſeems neceſſary to conclude that thoſe Diſcoveries, which he cou'd not make of himſelf, certainly were made to him.

And this the rather, that as Man was the laſt piece formed of the Creation, and as even his Body was framed before the Soul, without which it cou'd not perceive, was breathed into it, he cou'd not have any Mean to know how, where, or by whom or what, this World and all its Tenants were produced; and, by the nature of the thing, cou'd not in many Ages, if at all, arrive at any Knowledge of what was certainly intended to be the Object of his Meditation, and the Cauſe of his Love, Duty, and Service.

Wherefore as it was neceſſary he ſhou'd ſpeedily be inſtructed, our Author thinks, *Moſes* has intimated to us that he was, in telling us that God was pleas'd to plant a Garden for him, which he was to cultivate and keep. Our Author obſerving that Gardens amongſt the antient Nations, and planted Groves were ſacred, and Places of Worſhip; reflecting that it was but a poor Employment for the Chief of the Creation to cultivate a Garden, whilſt the Earth, not being yet curſed, nor Man doom'd to hard Labour, might produce ſpontaneouſly Fruits fit for him, eſpecially the Trees being of God's own planting; and obſerving that the Words tranſlated *to till* and *to keep*, alſo properly ſignify *to worſhip* and *obſerve*; and taking in a great many other Circumſtances, too numerous to be here recited, concludes that this Garden was planted and dreſſed in the form of a Plan or Scheme, to ſhew the Situations, Motions, and Actions of the hea-

venly Bodies, and the Powers in this Syſtem picture-ways or hieroglyphically, for Man's comprehending and remembring more certainly the Poſitions, Motions, and Influences of the heavenly Bodies, and the Actions of Fire, Light, and Air, or, as our Author calls it Spirit, in Circulation; ſeveral of thoſe Bodies, or of the Effects flowing from their Motions or Situations, and from the Circulation of Light and Air, might be repreſented by Trees of different Forms, or Growths; and the Circulation might it's ſelf be repreſented by ſome of thoſe Trees, or perhaps by the Waters in *Eden*, which, by the four Rivers were plentifully furniſh'd.

And as the Author underſtands this Garden to have been for Inſtruction, and the Intent of *Moſes*'s recording that Circumſtance to be, to let us know that Man was ſo inſtructed; ſo he lays a pretty deal of weight upon another matter, related in the ſame Hiſtory, of God's bringing the ſeveral Animals before *Adam*, to the end he might give them proper Names.

As the Names *Adam* gave to Animals were expreſſive of the chief Talents or Inſtincts of thoſe Animals, and afterwards in the Hebrew Language came generally to be Roots for Words to ſignify the Paſſions, Actions, or Inclinations which thoſe Inſtincts or Talents rais'd the Ideas of; our Author concludes that God caus'd theſe Animals to exhibit to *Adam*, for his Information and Inſtruction, their ſeveral Qualities, Particularities, and Inſtincts, to help him forward in the Knowledge that was to be communicated to him.

Our Author then perceiving clearly, that a Syſtem of Natural Philoſophy, or a Deſcription of this Machine was

publiſh'd by *Moſes*, when Revelation was, as he terms it, republiſh'd in writing; obſerving that there was full as much occaſion, or rather more, for a Diſcovery of this Syſtem to *Adam*, before he had opportunities to make obſervations than afterwards; and diſcovering the true Senſe and Meaning of thoſe Intimations that *Moſes* gives, concerning the Tranſactions in the Garden of *Eden*; concludes that *Adam* was by God inſtructed in the Knowledge of the Powers and Operations of this Syſtem, and of the Duty and Regard owing to the Author of it, as well as of ſo much of the Nature, Powers, and Attributes of the Author and Creator of it, as the Children of *Iſrael* were acquainted with, by the Republication of Revelation by *Moſes*, in writing.

As to the manner of this firſt Revelation, our Author, proceeding upon the Principles already mention'd, that Man is incapable of any Ideas but what are taken in by the Senſes, concludes that God could not give to Man, whilſt clogg'd with a Body, the true Idea of himſelf, or any otherways repreſent himſelf than by referring for a Similitude to that thing in this material Syſtem, that bore the neareſt Reſemblance in Perfection, Power, Nature, and Operation, and therefore he ſuppoſes, what he afterwards affirms he has prov'd; that, to give Man ſome Image or Likeneſs of himſelf, He pointed to the Machine by which this Syſtem is ſupported; the Heavens conſiſting of Matter in three different Conditions, Fire, Light, and Air or Spirit, as the Author calls it, which mutually ſupport each other, and neceſſarily concur in the joint Action of that powerful Machine, by which every material thing is moved, ſupported, and preſerv'd;

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exhibiting thereby ſome Similitude, from whence an Idea might be taken of his Eſſence, Perſonality, Power, and Manner of Action.

As *Adam* gave Names to all living Creatures, and the uſe and intent of a Name is to raiſe, in the Hearer, an Idea of the thing named; our Author ſuppoſes that every other Creature, that came within the cognizance of the firſt Man, had alſo a Name given to it; and inſiſts that the Heavens, or the Machine, deſcribed as above, was by *Adam* call'd *The Names*, by way of eminence, to ſignify that they were the Repreſentatives of the Deity, that from which the Idea of him was to be taken; שם *Shem* in the Hebrew Language ſignifies Name, and he avers that שמים *Shemim* is the Maſculine plural of that Noun, and ſignifies properly Names; and by this he underſtands that the Heavens or *Shemim* were always thought of, and ſpoken of by thoſe, who were rightly inform'd by Revelation, as the Repreſentation or material Object, expreſſive of the Deity.

If Mankind was thus inſtructed in the Powers and Operations of Nature, the Leſſon wou'd not ſoon, or eaſily, wear out; becauſe every Obſervation, every Symptom in Nature wou'd, day after day, juſtify it; but the Fact that this Knowledge was reveal'd, might ſoon be forgotten by the ſucceeding Generations of Men, or be disbeliev'd, and with it the Knowledge of the inviſible Author of all. Men who ſaw this Machine perfect and ſelf-moving might doubt whether it had not ſelf-exiſtence in it; and whether, as it was the immediate Cauſe and Producer of all their Comforts, it was not the only powerful Being to which they had any Obligations, and owed Duty and Service;

Service; whence, by degrees, Worſhip might be miſplac'd, being transferr'd from the true inviſible God to the viſible Repreſentation of him, in which all Power and Perfection might be lodged, by the Opinions of vain imaginary Men, who forgot or diſregarded Revelation.

That this in fact was the caſe, that the early Deſerters of the true God placed their Worſhip and Service on the Heavens, the Author proves at great length, and with great ſtrength of Evidence, as a good deal of his Reaſoning depends on it.

If the Scriptures are to be deciſive in this point, it is put beyond doubt, by the many formal Declarations that the Crime of the Nations, and of the apoſtate Iſraelites, was their ſerving the Heavens, the Hoſt of Heavens, the Queen of Heaven, as it is tranſlated; the Sun, Moon, and Stars; and falſe Gods *Baal*, *Moloch*, &c. which our Author ſhews were Repreſentations of ſome of the Powers or Attributes of the Heavens; and by the many Miracles wrought to convince Mankind, that they miſplac'd their Worſhip, and that the inviſible God had thoſe Powers under his Command.

And were their Credit in any degree queſtionable, ſuch Remains as we have of the antient Heathen Worſhip wou'd ſhew with abundant Evidence, that 'till they loſt the Knowledge of their Philoſophy (which happen'd by accidents largely deſcrib'd by our Author) they continually retain'd the Powers or Attributes of the Heavens, for the Objects of their religious Service.

Our Author admits that the more modern Heathens (by theſe he means the Greeks and Romans, and their Succeſſors in point of time) who had loſt the Knowledge

of

of Nature, loſt alſo the Knowledge of the Object of their Worſhip, and the Senſe of the very Names, by which their Gods were call'd or diſtinguiſh'd; ſo that tho' they ador'd the Air, they knew not for what: but then he avers, that the Antients (that is, all the Nations that preceded the change of Language, by which Knowledge was retain'd) ador'd the Heavens, or ſome Powers in them, or Attributes of them.

To this end he has collected the Names of all the Gods of the Nations mention'd in Scripture, together with the Names or Titles of their Temples, in his Treatiſe of *the Names and Attributes of the Trinity of the Gentiles,* and has offer'd an Examination and Analyſis of thoſe Names, together with ſome account of the Services paid to thoſe ſuppos'd Deities, and the many Reproaches made by the Prophets to their Votaries and Worſhippers; which, with great evidence ſeems to ſhew that theſe Gods were indeed none other than the Heavens, or ſome ſuppos'd Powers in them.

The very general Adoration paid by the Antients to the heavenly Bodies, the Worſhip of the Sun, of Fire, of Light, *&c.* that prevail'd in the earlieſt times; the conjectural Philoſophy of the late Heathens, the Greeks, and Romans, which centred in Opinions, that by their *Jupiter*, *Apollo*, &c. was meant either the *Æther*, or the Sun, or the active Force of Nature in general, juſtifies to thoſe who value ſuch Authorities, our Author's Sentiments.

Our Author is out of humour with thoſe, who fancy the Antients ſuch Ideots as to have worſhipp'd Brutes, Reptiles, Inſects, or any inanimate things.

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Let the Worſhip in *Egypt* be an inſtance; the reſpect they had to *Apis*, to a Bull or Cow was not at all paid to that Animal. All Mankind knows in relation to *Egypt*, becauſe their Monuments were better preſerv'd than thoſe of other Nations, that they wrote by Hieroglyphicks; that is, that they expreſs'd their Ideas by repreſenting the Figures of Animals, or of inanimate things, of Circles, Triangles, &c. in ſuch Series and Order, as to convey their Meaning; in ſo doing, they muſt fix upon ſome things eaſily diſtinguiſh'd, to repreſent what cou'd not ſo eaſily be painted, or by Figure expreſs'd. And if their Fancy led them to expreſs the Fire at the Sun, by the Front or Head of a Bull or Heifer; the Reſpect ſhew'd to that Animal was evidently meant to the Fire at the Sun, and the *Egyptians* did not worſhip the Bull or Heifer but the Sun; no more than in their hieroglyphical Writing a Bull or Serpent was meant, when the Figures of thoſe Animals were repreſented.

Our Author goes through a great many miſtakes of the Moderns in this particular, which are diſhonourable to the Underſtandings of the Antients, and amongſt theſe takes notice particularly of one, *viz.* the Reproach to the *Egyptians*, that they worſhipp'd an Onion; and indeed the Scripture upbraids the Iſraelites with their luſting after the Onions of *Egypt*.

But our Author ſays the Moderns will ceaſe to abuſe the Antients on this ſcore, when they take the trouble to cut up the common Onion, and to ſatisfy their own Eyes that it conſiſts of ſeven different Spheres, or *Involucra*, one within another, in the way that the Antients underſtood the ſeven Spheres in this Syſtem, and was therefore

more proper than any other thing, that can be thought of, to repreſent the Solar Syſtem in their hieroglyphical Writings, and religious Repreſentation.

He takes notice, that from the hieroglyphical Repreſentation of the Heavens, or, perhaps, of Fire amongſt the *Egyptians* by *Apis*, the Iſraelites Calf of Gold in the Wilderneſs, and the brace of Calves of *Jeroboam*, who had his Education in *Egypt*, ſprang: not that the Iſraelites at firſt, or *Jeroboam* afterwards, dreamed of any Powers or Vertues in thoſe Calves; but that they imagin'd, they put themſelves thereby under the Protection of the Heavens, of which they took that Idol to be the approved Emblem.

To all their hieroglyphical Repreſentations of their Deity, he obſerves they added a Crown, by way of Ornament or Diſtinction (as for much the ſame Reaſon, tho' in another reſpect, which he elſewhere explains, they did to their Prieſts;) this Crown was a Circle of Gold, the moſt precious Metal; from which aroſe, quite round the Circumference, Plates of Gold, formed like Pyramids, imitating Rays of Light; and in the intervals, between thoſe ſhining Rays, Spaces of the ſame pyramidal Form, but pointed inwards, to repreſent, as our Author ſays, the Irradiation or Flux of the Light outwards from the Sun, and the Preſſure or Return of the Air or Spirit inwards, by which he inſiſts this Machine is ſupported.

And in a great many more of their Ornaments and Emblems, he finds evident Traces of what their Service and Religion pointed at, to wit, a Recognition of the Powers in the Heavens, as that from whence all their

Bleſſings

Bleſſings flowed, and on which all their Dependance was ſettled.

As this miſtaking, which, in effect, is denying the true God, was evidently the Crime of thoſe Heathens, who were contemporary with the Iſraelitiſh State; ſo, our Author thinks, it was the Offence of the Antediluvian World, for which Men merited to be cut off all but one Family. His Reaſons for ſo thinking are numerous, but what to me appears the ſtrongeſt, is drawn from the Puniſhment, which was, as our Author inſiſts, the controuling the ſettled Operations of the Powers that were ſuppos'd to be Independent and Omnipotent. The deſtroying the Earth, and with it rebellious Man, the Reforming the Earth after that Diſſolution, and preſerving thoſe Perſons, by whom it was to be Re-peopled, from the general Ruin, to be Witneſſes for God of the Power by him exerted, and to inſtruct their Poſterity in the Service of that Being, by whom they were preſerv'd.

Our Author talks of deſtroying the Earth, which, he ſays, is in formal Words affirm'd by *Moſes*; he ſpeaks of forcing up the Waters of the Abyſs through Apertures, which, he ſays, were left for a Communication with the Waters above; diſſolving the Shell, reforming it with new Apertures and Fiſſures, and ſending back thoſe Waters again through Cracks and Fiſſures in the Shell of Stone, that environ'd the Abyſs, to their former Reſidence; he ſpeaks alſo of great quantities of Terreſtrial Matter carried down through thoſe Fiſſures and Openings along with the Waters into the Abyſs; that Matter formed at the Centre of the hollow Sphere into a ſolid Orb, like to a Kernel floating in the Waters, and very many effects

in the Motion of the Waters, and of this Earth to be accounted for by that Collection of Waters, and this floating Orb; all which, he aſſerts, are to be gather'd from what the Scripture reveals, and will account mechanically for the many various Appearances, which hitherto have been only gueſs'd at, from Schemes founded on falſe and impoſſible Principles.

As an inſtance of the Perfection of the natural Knowledge that is to be met with in the Scriptures, and of the Abſurdity of thoſe, who charge the Writers of them with Ignorance; he avers, that the Loadſtone and it's Effects are frequently, at leaſt ſix times, directly ſpoken of; that the Reaſon and Cauſe of the myſterious Phenomena of Magnetiſm are clearly to be gather'd from the reveal'd Philoſophy.

And however Freethinkers may make the ſtory of the Flood an Objection to the Veracity of the Scriptures, and may laugh at the Account, which our Author gives of it from the ſacred Writers; he affirms, that as he has had the Curioſity to make Collections of moſt of the different Sorts of things, and each of the ſame Sort differently form'd, under ground, and numerous Obſervations on the Situation of things in the Bowels of the Earth; he can, by evidence to the Eye, convince any rational Man, that the Account he gives of the Deſtruction at the Flood, and Reformation of the Earth, from the Scriptures, is graphically true.

Noah and his Family, who had remain'd in dutiful Allegiance to the inviſible God, were, doubtleſs, by this powerful piece of Vengeance over the rebellious World, convinced of the Supremacy of the Deity over his Rival the Heavens,

Heavens, whoſe Power they had ſeen ſuſpended and baffled; and their Poſterity continued dutiful 'till the time of building the Tower of *Babel*, when Nature and Imagination began to work again.

All Tranſlations have made a very odd ſpot of work of this piece of Hiſtory. They have ſuppos'd it ſays that, before this accident, all Men ſpoke the ſame Language; that, afraid of another Deluge, they ſet about building a Tower, whoſe top ſhou'd reach to the Heavens; that they did this to get them a Name; and that God became ſo jealous of this Attempt, that it was worth his while to work a very extraordinary Miracle, to confound their Language, ſo as one cou'd not underſtand what the other ſaid; and to diſperſe them over the face of the Earth; and from this notable Event the Birth of many Languages, and the firſt Peopling of many Nations is ſought.

Our Author, who inſiſts that a perfect Knowledge of the Hebrew Language will deliver the Scripture from many Abſurdities, with which it is by the Tranſlations ſaddled, ſays;

In the *firſt* place, the Text does not bear that all the Earth was of one Language, or that their Language was confounded. It ſays indeed, that all the Earth was of one [שפה *Shaphah*] Lip; and afterwards that God ſaid he wou'd confound their Lip.

Now our Author obſerves what, upon comparing all the Texts, holds very truly, that the Hebrews had two Words of nearly the ſame Signification to thoſe, that did not advert to the Diſtinction; לשן *Leſhun*, which ſignifies Tongue, and *Shaphah*, which ſignifies Lip: but which,

which, in the Propriety of their Expreſſion, they never confounded; uſing *Leſhun*, perpetually to ſignify Language, and *Shaphah* to ſignify religious Service, or Confeſſion, and never to ſignify Language. All therefore the Text ſays is; that, before the Building of *Babel*, the whole Earth had one and the ſame Religious Service or Confeſſion; and that, upon that Attempt, the new Confeſſion, which the Projectors of this Building intended to ſet up, was to be confounded, which begun in the Diſperſion of the Undertakers.

In the *next* place, the Tranſlators render the Text as if it ſaid, *Let us build us a Tower, whoſe top ſhall reach to the Heavens, that we may make us a Name, leſt we be diſpers'd*, &c. And ſurely, beſides other Improprieties in this ſuppos'd Deſign, it muſt appear a very ridiculous Project to build a Tower, that ſhou'd defend againſt Deſtruction by a Flood, in ſo very low a Ground as the Valley of *Shinar*; or from Diſperſion, which want of Proviſion would force them to. But our Author obſerves that the Hebrew Text ſays nothing of reaching to the Heavens; that Word is a meer Supplement from the Tranſlators Fancy, who were ignorant that the Word render'd *Tower* ſignifies *Temple*, and therefore did not perceive the obvious Meaning of the whole, which is, that theſe wicked Men, who liv'd in a Country where, 'till then, there was no difference of Religion, the whole Earth being of one Confeſſion, apoſtatiſed to the Service and Worſhip of the Heavens; and encouraged one another to build a City and Temple, the top whereof ſhou'd be ſacred to the Heavens; and that God, to check this early Relapſe into the Religion of their Antediluvian

Forefathers, thought fit to confound, not their Language, but their Confeſſion or Liturgy, that is, to make them differ about the Manner and Form of the intended Service and Worſhip, which had the effect, at that time, of marring their irreligious Project; of making them fall out amongſt themſelves, of making them deſiſt from their Enterpriſe.

Taking the thing thus, and ſuppoſing theſe Men miſtook the Heavens for a Deity, there was ſenſe in their building a Temple, and on it an Altar to that Being that cou'd, according to their Suppoſition, prevent their Deſtruction and Diſperſion; and it was well and mercifully done, on the part of God, to make them differ about their intended Service, and thereby to fall out amongſt themſelves, and relinquiſh the Undertaking. But, tranſlating the Text as our Expoſitors have done, a moſt abſurd and impracticable Attempt is ſuppos'd to call upon the Interpoſition of the Deity, in a very unneceſſary Miracle, which, at the ſame time, our Author avers, appears not to have been wrought; becauſe the ſame Scriptures ſhew the whole Earth was of one Language, tho' not of one Lip or religious Confeſſion, for ſeveral Ages after.

As our Author has deliver'd the Scriptures, by his acquaintance with Hebrew, from this notorious Abſurdity, with which the Ignorance of the Tranſlators had ſtain'd it; he, on an infinity almoſt of other Occaſions, interpoſes to ſet their falſe Interpretations to rights. According to his Conſtruction of the Language, it is no where in the Text ſaid, that the Earth ſtands ſtill, and that the Sun goes round it; but on the contrary it is, on every

proper Occaſion, inculcated that the Sun ſtands ſtill, fixed, and that the Earth runs round.

After the Flood God did not put the Rainbow firſt in the Cloud, as a Sign to Man; but he conſtituted, or gave (which is the Hebrew Word) that Bow, which naturally was in the Cloud, as a Memorial of his Promiſe not to deſtroy the Earth again by Water.

And in Multitudes of other Caſes our Author brings, as he ſays, from the genuine Conſtruction of the Text, a very commodious Senſe, where the Tranſlation is, not to ſay worſe, hardly intelligible.

As our Author's general Propoſition, that the mechanical Powers in the Heavens was the Deity ſet up by the Heathen, againſt the God of Nature and of *Iſrael*, is a key to the underſtanding a vaſt Number of Expreſſions, Expoſtulations, and Claims uſed throughout by the Writers of the Scriptures, which paſſed unheeded, or were thought trivial, and accommodated to the miſtaken Notions of ignorant Men heretofore; ſo the ſame Poſition, as he manages it, is of very great ſervice in ſhewing the Propriety and perfect Intention and Uſe of very many Miracles, miraculous Appearances, and religious Inſtitutions, which no Man hitherto has pretended to ſhew the adequate Reaſon, Uſe, or Occaſion for.

If the Religion of the rebellious Heathen was to aſcribe all Power to the Machine of the Heavens, in the Conditions of Fire, Light, and Air or Spirit, but principally in that of Fire, on the acting whereof all the reſt ſeemed to depend: Then it was proper for the Deity, when a new Revelation and religious Oeconomy was to be eſta-

bliſhed in the Family of *Abraham*, to paſs between the Parts of the Creatures, appointed to be divided, in the Appearance of Fire, Light, and Smoke.

It was proper to ſhew his Superiority over the Gods of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, by puniſhing them, who worſhipp'd Fire, by Fire ſent from Heaven: It was proper when *Moſes* was to be ſent upon his Miſſion, to appear to him in the Buſh in the form of Fire.

It was proper, when the Conteſt was between the Prieſts of *Baal* and the Prophet *Eliſha*, and when the formal Tryal was to be, whether *Baal* or *Jehovah* was the true God, by this Teſt, whether the Offering of the one or of the other ſhou'd be firſt conſum'd by Fire ſent from Heaven; it was proper, I ſay, on that caſe, for *Jehovah* to give proof of his Power, by ſending down Fire, and conſuming the Sacrifice, Water, *&c.* And

Not to mention a great many other Inſtances, when the Captains of Fifty were ſucceſſively ſent out by the King of *Iſrael*, who then fell in with the Worſhip of the Heavens, in defiance of the true God, to bring *Elijah* to him a Priſoner; it was proper to puniſh their Preſumption, and to manifeſt the Power of *Jehovah* over the Heavens, to conſume thoſe Captains by Fire ſent from Heaven.

And tho' the many Miracles wrought in *Egypt*, and in the Wilderneſs, to which, for evidence of the Power and Supremacy of *Jehovah*, there are many References and Appeals made by the later Writers of the Scriptures, ſeem to our modern Wiſemen, who think that God might have done the Buſineſs a much ſhorter way, very unneceſſary and ſuperfluous, and as ſuch are disbeliev'd: Yet

our Author apprehends they were abſolutely neceſſary to the Deſign of *Jehovah*, and of the utmoſt Importance to Mankind, for ſettling the Point in Diſpute, between the Followers of the true, and thoſe of the falſe God.

The Intent of theſe various Miracles, our Author ſays, was, in the face and ſeeing of the moſt powerful and populous, the moſt learned, the moſt ſuperſtitiouſly addicted Nation then in the World to the ſervice of the Heavens, to ſhew the Power of *Jehovah* over their pretended Gods in all their Attributes and Powers, and over their Prieſts; and, in ſo doing, to convict that People, and all that ſhou'd hear of thoſe Tranſactions, and ſtill remain in the ſame Error; and to convince the People that he was about to ſeparate to himſelf ſo fully of his Authority, that they ſhou'd never (bearing theſe things in mind) apoſtatiſe.

For theſe ends, after the Magicians or Prieſts of the fictitious Gods were foiled, *Jehovah* permitted *Pharaoh* to harden his Heart, or to reſiſt; until by repeated Miracles he had, to the ſight of all Men, aſſerted his Superiority over his Rivals, in controuling all the Actions and Powers, for which they were falſly thought Gods, and making them afflict their Votaries. The Sun and Light were turn'd into a palpable Darkneſs, for three Days. The Air was turn'd peſtilential; the very Duſt of the Earth was turn'd noxious; the River, which was emblematically ſacred, in whoſe Waters they purify'd themſelves, and on whoſe Banks they worſhipp'd, was turn'd into Blood; the Wind brought Locuſts to deſtroy the Votaries of the Wind. All theſe Plagues, and many more, which our Author explains the Propriety of at length,

length in his *Eſſay towards a Natural Hiſtory of the Bible*, were ſo directed as to leave the Iſraelites unhurt, Witneſſes of the Superiority of their God, of the Obedience of the Heavens, and of the Diſtraction and Folly of thoſe, who worſhipp'd them.

Hitherto Miracles have been look'd upon, generally, by Mankind as ſo many prodigious, unnatural, and therefore wonderful Events, ſurpaſſing the Power of Man to compaſs; brought about by divine Power, to vouch the Miſſion of the Perſon, by whoſe Hands they were wrought, and to gain Credit to what he ſhou'd reveal, or deliver. But, if our Author is to be followed, they are to be conſider'd as tending to an higher Purpoſe, and are ſo many Manifeſtations of the Power of the true God; to gain Credit to himſelf, in Contradiction to the pretended Powers of the Heavens, that were ſet up in Oppoſition. And are ſo ſorted and choſen, as beſt to prove that there is no inherent eſſential Powers in the Machine, the Heavens; but that all inherent and eſſential Power is in *Jehovah* alone; whoſe Servants, at his Command, could alter or ſuſpend the Courſe of Nature.

It was, according to our Author, to confirm the Children of *Iſrael* in this Faith, that the Wind (in Hebrew the Spirit) ſeparated the Waters of the Red Sea, and made them, contrary to the ordinary Courſe of Nature, ſtand on either Side in Heaps. That by *Moſes*, *Jehovah* ſhew'd, in miniature, the ſame Power that was exercis'd in deſtroying the Earth at the Flood, by cracking the *Strata* of Stone, and making a Spring of Water guſh out of a Rock, upon the touch of a Rod. That the God of the Nations, in the Appearance of Fire, Light, and Cloud,

or Spirit, which the Author ſays (as ſhall be hereafter explain'd) was the Emblem of the true God, was forced to attend, to lead, and to protect the Camp of *Iſrael*. That the Air was made to rain down Food upon the Armies of *Jehovah*. And that *Jehovah* was pleas'd miraculouſly, and at an appointed time, to ſhew himſelf in the Appearance of Fire on *Sinai*, and from thence to deliver the Law, and offer a Covenant to the Iſraelites.

If all theſe things ſhall be underſtood to be done to ſettle the Conteſt, and eſtabliſh the Authority of *Jehovah* over the Heavens, his Rivals at that time, and all other pretended Deities that thereafter might, by the Madneſs or Ignorance of Men, be ſet up:

Then the Scope and Intent of the Law, given in the ten Commandments, will be better underſtood; and the Meaning of the Religious Oeconomy, Ceremonies, and Services, that thereafter were eſtabliſh'd, will be more fully comprehended.

The firſt four Commands, by the Confeſſion of every body, are intended to aſſert and inculcate the Sovereignty of the Deity, and the ſecluſive Title to Service, that is in *Jehovah*, the Creator and Preſerver of all things; in contradiction to all other pretended Gods, whoſe Service is prohibited and guarded againſt in the moſt expreſs Manner; Prohibitions that do not ſeem neceſſary to be authoris'd and introduced with ſo much Pomp, and by ſo many Miracles, if the Worſhip of a Stock or a Stone, a red Heifer or a Calf, taken in themſelves, and not conſider'd as the Repreſentation of that Being (the Heavens) in which all material Power in this Syſtem was known to reſide, had been the only thing to be dreaded.

The other Commands are generally call'd the moral Law, and it is commonly thought that they were intended for a Syſtem of ſocial Law, as they ſeem to prohibit Treſpaſſes againſt Society.

But in this our Author differs, and ſays, that when Men are ſatisfied, as they may eaſily be from Scripture and from Hiſtory, that the Worſhippers of the Heavens call'd their Gods their Fathers and Mothers, and worſhipp'd them as ſuch; that they held it a religious and acceptable ſervice to immolate human Sacrifices, nay to offer their Firſt-born to Fire; that they held it lawful, nay pleaſing to ſome of their Gods, to ſteal and rob for Sacrifice. That Proſtitution of their Wives and Daughters, in honour of their Gods, was a flagrant Part of their Religion, &c. The Reaſons for giving theſe Commands, commonly call'd moral, will appear to be the ſame; as for giving the reſt, to wit, to ſettle and eſtabliſh the Worſhip of the true, tho' inviſible God, and to reſtrain from the Worſhip of the Heavens, and the chief Abominations practis'd in that Worſhip.

As to the moral or ſocial Law, according to our Author, it was not the immediate view or purpoſe of God, in the Law given from the Mount, to eſtabliſh or explain it. The Competition for Superiority with the falſe God, the Heavens, was the point to be ſettled; and the Abominations of the prophane Worſhip of that fictitious God were to be prohibited, and eradicated out of the ſervice of the Children of *Iſrael*.

The ſocial Law requir'd no Publication, no Authority from *Jehovah* by Miracles to confirm it; except in thoſe Points in which the abſurd ſervice of the Heathens had

had encroach'd upon it. It was no queſtion amongſt the Heathens, no more than it was amongſt the Children of *Abraham*, whether it was unlawful to kill, or to commit Adultery on any other Occaſion, except for the Honour of their pretended Deities in religious Service; and therefore, according to our Author, there was no occaſion for ſettling theſe ſocial Duties, excepting ſo far as the Miſtakes in Worſhip made it neceſſary.

As the principal View of the Decalogue, and all the Pomp and Train of Miracles, with which it was introduced, was to ſettle the Superiority of *Jehovah* over his Rivals, the Heavens, ſo our Author obſerves, that all the Memorials of theſe Miracles, the Services, Feaſts, Sabbaths, Rites of Sacrifice, Ceremonies, the Tabernacle, the Temple, their Ornaments and Furniture, the Inſtitution of Prieſthood, with the Ordinances relating thereto, the Prieſts Garments, &c. were intended to commemorate, to acknowledge, and for ever to keep in view the evidence of the Superiority then ſettled; and to explain by Emblems, a ſort of Language then well underſtood, the Nature, Reſidence, and Manner of acting of God, in oppoſition to that of his Rivals; and his merciful Diſpoſition and Purpoſe towards his Creatures, all which the Author has in a great Meaſure explain'd, and applied in a very new and ſurpriſing Manner, and promiſes, on a proper Occaſion, fully to explain and ſhew the Application of the reſt.

Tho' a Syſtem of Philoſophy, Religion, and religious Service was thus reveal'd in writing by the Hand of *Moſes* in the Wilderneſs, as our Author affirms; yet he is far from thinking that the World was left without Information,

formation, or Direction in theſe Matters, 'till this time; on the contrary he aſſerts, that the Inſtruction and Law, given by *Moſes*, was no more than a Republication in writing of that Law, originally given to *Adam* before, and upon the Fall.

From the Goodneſs, the Wiſdom, and the Juſtice of God; from the Neceſſities of the new-made Creature Man, and from the Hints, above mentioned, of God's planting a Garden in *Eden*, and bringing all living Creatures before *Adam*; our Author concludes, that Nature, it's Operations, and Dependance on *Jehovah*, was fully explain'd to the firſt Man; and thence his Duty, as well as chief Good, diſcover'd to him, in admiring, adoring, and, with Love and Gratitude, ſerving the Author of his Being.

Whether any, and what Services, by way of acknowledgment, were at this time requir'd of *Adam*, does not appear; but it does appear that he was prohibited, under the penalty of Death, from eating of the Fruit of a certain Tree in the middle of the Garden, which is call'd *the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.*

Our Author ſuppoſes that this Tree, ſaid to ſtand in the middle of the Garden, was in the Plan of that Garden intended to repreſent the Sun in the Centre of this Syſtem, which keeps it all a going; and that the Prohibition to eat the Fruit of it, emblematically forewarned *Adam* from truſting to it's ſupport in any thing, but what, as a Machine without Knowledge, it was appointed to do; and he ſuſpects that this very forbidden Fruit was the *Malum Perſicum*, famed amongſt the Heathens; in *Greece* afterwards, taken to be the Laurel, ſacred to *Apollo*

the

the God of Wiſdom, and which was ſuppos'd capable of giving Knowledge and Wiſdom.

He obſerves that this Command was firſt broken by *Eve*, who had it but at ſecond hand from *Adam*, and who did not know the Natures, and ſeveral Qualities and Capacities of brute Creatures, as *Adam* did, at the Inſtigation of the Devil, by a Serpent, who as a bait propos'd Improvement in Knowledge; a very laudable Motive, had not the Method of gaining it been prohibited.

He imagines that *Adam* was not deceiv'd as *Eve* was; but that, ſeeing her loſt, his Paſſion for her made him deſperately reſolve to ſhare the ſame Fortune with her, and to be join'd with her in the Crime, and the Puniſhment. And that this was the Reaſon why, when their Eyes were open'd, they not only became aſham'd of their Crime, but at the Sight of thoſe Parts, which rais'd in each mutual Deſires; the Violence of which induc'd Woman to ſeduce Man into a Participation of her Guilt, and induc'd Man to yield to Ruin and Death, rather than be divided from her.

Thoſe, who are delighted with ſearching into the Origin and Uſage of Words, will not be diſagreeably entertain'd by a Reflection or two our Author makes, on this Occaſion. He ſays that עון *aven*, which properly ſignifies the Act of Cohabitation with Woman, is in the Hebrew Language made the Root for Iniquity or Wickedneſs. And that פתה *Petah*, which principally ſignifies that part of the Body that *Eve* is ſuppos'd to have hid, in the ſame Language is made expreſſive of ſeducing, overperſuading, deceiving.

And

And our Author thinks that to keep up the Memory of this Crime, and of the principal Motive that induced Man to fall into it; as alſo to be a Caveat againſt being carried too far by that Motive, on future Occaſions, Circumciſion was inſtituted; which took place amongſt the Nations before *Abraham*'s Days, and was reviv'd only in his Family; and re-enacted in the Law of *Moſes*, as ſeveral other antient Inſtitutions were.

Our Author inſiſts, that Man cou'd not have ſuſtain'd his Life any conſiderable time after the Fall, tho' God had not been pleas'd by any Act to inflict Death upon him. The Conſciouſneſs of the Diſpleaſure of God, the Remembrance of Felicity loſt, and the Apprehenſions of the juſt Vengeance of the offended Deity, muſt have produc'd ſtrange Diſtractions in the Mind of unhappy *Adam*; that he liv'd then, is a Demonſtration that he receiv'd ſome Comfort, ſome Hint of the Poſſibility of a Reconciliation; and that he actually had Promiſes that comforted him, the Scriptures in formal Words reveal. *The Seed of the Woman ſhall bruiſe the Head of the Serpent.*

Tho' the Account of this Promiſe, and thoſe Hopes of Peace, is very ſhort, yet our Author thinks that, at this time, a proper and intelligible Account was given to Man of the Manner and Means of his Reconciliation, and Reſtitution to the Protection of God; and that Rites, Obſervances, and Services were inſtituted, to keep in mind, and acknowledge the Sovereignty of the Creator; the Crime of Man, and his Forfeiture; and the Promiſe and Means of Peace and Salvation.

The Foundations of his Opinion, beſides what is already ſaid, are in general: That from the Scripture it

 appears,

appears, before the Publication of the Law in *Sinai*, Believers and Unbelievers were in the Practice and Poſſeſſion of many, or moſt of thoſe Rites and Inſtitutions, which muſt have depended on ſome antecedent Authority, that was common to all. And by the univerſal Conſent of all prophane Authors it appears, that, after the Æra of *Moſes*, the ſame Inſtitutions and Obſervances had taken place over all the known World; tho' no body ſuppoſes they ow'd their Origin to the Laws of a Nation, that the reſt of the World held in Diſlike and Contempt.

To inſtance in a few; offering Sacrifice, and that by Fire, was in uſe before the written Law; *Abel* offer'd; *Noah* ſacrific'd; *Abraham* and his Contemporaries did ſo; *Job* practis'd it; it was us'd by *Balaam*; it was practis'd for Thankſgiving; for Atonement; for binding Covenants: at the ſame time it is obvious, that naturally it had no Tendency to either of thoſe Ends; and, as it was univerſal, muſt needs owe it's Beginning to an Inſtitution, that was authoritative over all.

That Sacrifice was held propitiatory among the Heathens cannot be deny'd by any, that is converſant in their Writings; their Hiſtories, their Poems are full of it; and, if there cou'd remain any doubt, *Balaam*'s repeated Attempts to placate the Deity, and the over-warm Zeal of thoſe, who gave the Fruit of their Body for the Sin of their Soul; who ſacrificed their Firſt-born to *Moloch*, to atone for themſelves, their Family, and People, and to procure his Favour and Protection, are abſolute Proofs.

Our Author, on this Subject, takes notice, that God is ſaid to have cloath'd our firſt Parents with the Skins of Beaſts,

Beaſts, that Part of the Offering, that by the written Law appears to have fallen to the Prieſt's Share; and thence concludes that the Beaſts, from which thoſe Skins were taken, had been ſacrificed.

Another Inſtance is in Firſt-Fruits, which appear amongſt all the Heathen to have been offer'd, as an Acknowledgment to their ſeveral Deities. The Practice is as old as the Days of *Cain* and *Abel*, who cannot be ſuppos'd to have begun it without Inſtitution for their Authority.

A third Inſtance is in the Inſtitution of Prieſthood, or giving to the Firſt-born, or Eldeſt of the Family, a Right to approach the Altar, and to offer Sacrifice, which in the Jewiſh Diſpenſation was changed from the Firſt-born to the Family of *Levi*. If the Prieſt was, in one Conſideration, a Repreſentation of the ſame Perſon, that the Sacrifice repreſented in another, it is reaſonable to conclude, that the Inſtitution of Prieſthood, and of Sacrifice, bore the ſame Date.

From the Expreſſion, *Gen.* iv. 3. our Author collects, that there were appointed Times; perhaps new Moons, and ſettled Feaſts from the Beginning, for Sacrifice, Service, and Acknowledgment.

And from *Moſes*'s Account of the Creation, and what followed it, nothing is more clear than that the Reſt of the Sabbath was from the Beginning appointed, for preſerving a perpetual Memorial of the Creation, compleated by *Jehovah*; and for yielding to Man a fit Opportunity, free from Labour, Toil, and Care, to contemplate the high and beneficent Attributes of God in his Works; and to diſpoſe the Mind to Acknowledgment, Duty,

Love, Praiſe, and Adoration, the only Tribute that is truly ſuited to the Nature of that perfect Being; and the only Exerciſe that ſeems proper for qualifying Man to deſire, and to enjoy a nearer Union with his God.

As our Author finds, in the written Law, ſeveral particular Sorts of Wood, diſtinguiſh'd by their Uſes in the Tabernacle; and ſeveral Sorts of Boughs and Branches of Trees, appointed to be carried and uſed in the Feaſt of Tabernacles; he concludes, that thoſe Trees were in the Days of *Adam*, ſo to ſpeak, conſecrated as Emblems or Memorials of particular Perſons, Actions, or Things, that they were to repreſent.

A Garden was planted in *Eden*; and I have hinted at the uſe, for which our Author thinks it was dreſſed there. The Patriarchs, particularly *Abraham*, ſacrificed under Oaks, nay planted Oaks for the end of Sacrifice and Religious Service under them. The Antients planted Gardens, Groves, &c. upon religious Accounts, and very likely held particular Trees in Reſpect, as repreſenting particular Powers or Actions.

The Oak, which is in Hebrew אלה *Elah*, our Author ſays, was appointed the Memorial of a Covenant confirm'd by Oath.

The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, repreſented the Powers in this Syſtem. The Fruit of the laſt, as our Author ſays, with Boughs of the firſt; Branches of the Palm-Tree, and Twigs of ſeveral other Trees were to be held in the Hands of the Children of *Iſrael* at the Feaſt of Tabernacles, their grand Feſtivity for Mirth and rejoycing; and he inſiſts, that the carrying thoſe ſeveral Boughs and Fruits had a religious, emblematical Meaning, then

then very well underſtood; as it was the only way, before writing, of communicating Knowledge; and as intelligible, very near, as Writing was afterwards. Becauſe theſe Emblems were then ſo fully underſtood, the Meaning of them is not by *Moſes* explain'd; but our Author ſeems to think it poſſible ſtill to decypher and explain them; only thus much he apprehends is plain from the Reflection made, that the uſe of thoſe ſeveral Sorts of Trees being preſcribed, without any Explication of the Reaſon or Purpoſe, theſe Purpoſes muſt have been univerſally known at the time, and the Trees themſelves muſt have been conſtituted Emblems, as early as the planting the firſt Garden.

As Hieroglyphicks, or Emblems, were the firſt Method of conveying and continuing Knowledge, which was ſucceeded by the more perfect Invention of Writing; and as all religious Service was originally perform'd, in an emblematical Way, which carried the Mind from the Emblem, Type, or emblematical or typical Act, to the Perſon or Thing repreſented; our Author thinks, that after Writing was invented, for the more certain Preſervation of divine Knowledge, the Services were ſtill continued, and perform'd in the old way, and Types and Emblems were of the ſame Uſe and Effect as ever; hence Sacrifice, *&c.* were continued; and at the ſame time that God deſcribed the Powers of this Syſtem, as dependant upon himſelf, in writing; he cauſed the ſame Sort of Account of them to be repreſented, and hung up hieroglyphically in the Tabernacle, and afterwards in the Temple. The Lamp in the Temple, the Pillars, and their Ornaments before the Porch, our Author inſiſts,

were

were an hieroglyphical Deſcription of the Powers of this Syſtem, of the Deities the Heathens ador'd, which *Jehovah* willed to be nailed up in the place of the Reſidence of his Preſence, to bear in mind their Inferiority and Dependance on him; and that they were to be conſider'd in no other view than as Emblems of himſelf; and his Servants.

As our Author, by this new and very ſurpriſing Manner of Interpretation, gives light to an infinite Number of Inſtitutions, Prohibitions, Declarations, Claims and Services; ſo by accurately examining the Force and Propriety of the original Language, and comparing it with the Inſtitutions and Services, when rightly underſtood, he thinks he has made a world of very important Diſcoveries.

Various are the gueſſes that have been made by learned Men, concerning the Senſe and Meaning of the Word יהוה *Jehovah*, the ineffable Name of God, as the Jews call it; our Author has fixed on that Conſtruction, which makes it the Eſſence exiſting; that Eſſence or Subſtance, which has Being in it's ſelf neceſſarily, without Dependance upon any other, and in Diſtinction to all other Eſſence or Subſtance whatever. יה *Jah* ſignifies the Eſſence, by Eminence; and (if I reach the Author's Meaning, which ſeems to be wholly new, and uncommon on this Article) by the Addition of the other Word הוה *Hovah*, ſignifying actual Being with Powers and Faculties, gives an Idea of that ſufficient all-perfect Being, that has Exiſtence in it's ſelf, or by the Neceſſity of its own Nature exiſts. Something like to this, ingenious Moderns have ſtruck out by the Light of Nature, as they ſay, for the Idea

Idea of the ſovereign Being; and it will be no great Reproach to their Notion, if it falls in with the Sentiment contain'd in the Name given by God to himſelf in the Scripture; nor a ſlight Confirmation of the Accuracy and Perfection of the Scripture, if, when it is fairly examin'd, it is found to expreſs Sentiments ſo juſt, ſo lofty, and ſo difficult, if at all poſſible, to be come at by the Light of Nature only.

אל *El* is another Name, which the Scripture gives to the Deity; it commonly is tranſlated *the ſtrong*, or *powerful*, *fortis*. But our Author inſiſts, that it ſignifies properly, the Irradiator. An Idea borrowed from that Irradiation or Emiſſion of Light and Influence from the Sun to move, ſupport, and preſerve, in Being and Action, every thing in this material Syſtem; from whence it is applied to the Deity, to expreſs ſomething of that inconceivable Power, Influence, and Manner of Acting, by which the Deity acts uncontroulably, where it is not locally preſent. As the Author from Scripture avers the proper Reſidence of God, is without this Syſtem, ſo that, by this Name, that Irradiation, which, according to our Author's Philoſophy, is in a great meaſure the Supporter of Nature, is attributed to *Jehovah*; and ſuch a Power of Irradiation in a ſpiritual Senſe, as we ſee perform'd by the Sun in a material Way, is aſcribed to the inviſible God.

To confirm this Sentiment, and indeed a very conſiderable Branch of our Author's Scheme, he obſerves that the Word הללו-יה *Hallelu-jah*, which is the Burden of almoſt all the Pſalms of Praiſe and Thankſgiving, the firſt Word frequently and the laſt; and which is tranſlated

ſometimes, *Praiſe ye the Lord*, ſometimes is tranſcribed, without tranſlating, *Hallelujah*, ſignifies properly and undoubtedly Irradiation to *Jah*, or aſcribe ye Irradiation to the Eſſence. Now if the utmoſt Honour the believing Jews cou'd expreſs for their God, in their moſt devout and thankful Praiſes, was to aſcribe Irradiation to his Eſſence; it, on the one hand, renders our Author's Opinion of the Senſe of *El* very probable; and, on the other hand, very ſtrongly proves, that the Scripture-Ideas of the Deity, and of it's Powers and Action were borrowed from viſible Operations of the Sun, the Light and Air, and their Actions in the Heavens in all this material Syſtem.

There is ſtill another Name for God, the moſt commonly uſed of any in Scripture, and on the true Senſe of which our Author builds a great deal; it is אלהים *Elohim*, always tranſlated *Deus* or God.

All the World, Jews and Chriſtians, agree that this Word is plural; ſeldom, not once in five hundred times, to be met with ſingular; almoſt always (a few Inſtances excepted) join'd with Nouns and Verbs in the ſingular Number.

From this Word, which the modern Jews, and, after them, Chriſtians have tranſlated *Deus*, in the ſingular Number, when the true God is meant; but *Dii*, in the Plural, when it is apply'd to the Gods of the Nations; ſeveral learned Men have drawn Arguments for the Trinity, and have taken it to be a full Proof, at leaſt, of the Plurality of Perſons. But as theſe Men did not aſſert, or undertake to prove, that the Scriptures were wrote with perfect Accuracy, and were forced to admit a great many

many things to be written, that they could not ſtrictly and philoſophically juſtify; and as they pretended to fix no certain Origin or Senſe for the Word, from the Meaning whereof their Argument cou'd be examin'd or juſtify'd, theſe Opinions made no great way to induce Men to think, that the Doctrine of the Trinity was founded in the Old Teſtament.

But as our Author inſiſts, that every Word of the ſacred Book is written with the utmoſt Accuracy, Truth, and Perfection; if that Propoſition is made good, what he ſays for the Word *Elohim*, for evidence of the Plurality of Perſons in the Deity, muſt have great weight.

Notwithſtanding an Infinity of gueſſes made by thoſe, who pretended to be learned in the Hebrew Language, none ever hit on any thing that carried a Senſe, in the leaſt degree, ſatisfactory; our Author has fix'd on the Word אלה *Elah*, an Oath or Adjuration (ſo tranſlated perpetually by the Jews, wherever it occurs in the Scriptures, whether as Verb or Noun, except where it is intended to ſignify the Deity, and then they take care to hide that Meaning) as the Root from which it is derived. And affirms, that by the Genius of the Language אלהים *Elohim* ſignifies, in the Plural, *Adjuratores*, Perſons bound by Oath or Covenant; referring this Name to that Engagement, which the divine Perſons are ſuppos'd to have enter'd into, for the Preſervation and Salvation of Man, called the Covenant; and averring, that it is expreſſive of that Relation, in which that Oath or Covenant, put God to Man.

He inſiſts, that as this was the original Light, in which, after the Fall, God was willing to be known to Man,

for his Comfort, and for encouraging him in his Duty, all the apoſtate Heathens, who relinquiſh'd the true *Elohim*, and reſorted to their Rivals the Heavens for Protection, retain'd, nevertheleſs, this comfortable Appellation, apply'd it to the Heavens; and as they ſacrificed with the utmoſt Zeal and Serioufneſs to them, look'd upon them as their *Elohim*; all-powerful Beings, in covenant with them, for their Good here and hereafter, and expected certainly from their hands Protection and Performance of their ſuppos'd Covenants: hence by innumerable Places in Scripture it appears, that they look'd upon themſelves as bound never to relinquiſh their *Elohim*; and verily believ'd that their *Elohim*, in their turn, were bound never to deſert them.

It is remarkable, that of the many Names, which the Deity has in Scripture, this is the only one, which concerns the Salvation of Man, that the Heathens carry'd off with them to apply to their falſe Gods; for whom they coined other additional, or diſtinguiſhing Names, without number, according to their different Humours, and the different Powers and Attributes of the Heavens, for which they worſhipp'd them. But ſtill, with all theſe, they mix'd the Character or Appellation of *Elohim*, as what expreſs'd their Connection with, and relation to them.

And if this term ſhall be allow'd to mean Perſons bound by Oath or Covenant, then it will fit Kings or Governours, who were under ſuch Ties and Engagements to the People, and to them it is ſometimes apply'd in Scripture.

At whatever Time the Jews thought fit firſt to tranſlate this Word ſingular, it is certain the Heathens retain'd it in the plural Senſe; and the Jews, when tranſlating that Word apply'd to the Heathen Gods, render it plural.

Our Author obſerves, that the Word *Elohim* is generally join'd with Verbs and Nouns in the ſingular Number; yet ſometimes the Words join'd with it, determine the Senſe ſo flatly to be plural, that, without Impropriety, ſuch as is no where to be met with in the ſacred Book, the Perſons, or Things ſpoken of, muſt neceſſarily be plural.

In the Conſultation that is repreſented to have been had by the *Elohim*, for the Formation of Man, in the firſt of *Geneſis*, *The* Elohim *ſaid*, *Let us make Man in our Image, according to our Similitudes*.

And *Geneſis* iii. 22. after Man had eaten of the forbidden Fruit, the *Elohim* ſays, *Behold Man is become like one of us*; the Meaning of the Expreſſion, and in what Senſe Man was become like one of the *Elohim*, our Author, on another Occaſion, endeavours to explain: but from theſe, and ſuch-like flat Declarations of more Perſons than one in the *Elohim*, he inſiſts it is beyond doubt, that the Word is intentionally us'd plural.

On this Subject he makes great uſe of the Repreſentatives of the *Elohim*, the *Shemim*, the Names, the Powers in the Machine, the Heavens being plural; and thoſe Powers being, according to his Apprehenſion, juſt three, Fire, Light, and Spirit or Air; and if it is ſuppos'd, that theſe three Powers ſupport all the Motions and Actions in this Machine, and that the Machine was given for a Repreſentation of the Deity, it's Nature, Manner of Exiſtence,

Powers and Actions by itſelf; it is very difficult to call in doubt our Author's Concluſion, that the one Subſtance of the Heavens, acting in three Conditions, or with diſtinct Powers, is expreſſive of the one Eſſence and Perſonality of the *Elohim*.

And, indeed, to do our Author's Argument juſtice, ſuppoſing the receiv'd Opinion of a Trinity in the Deity, were to be illuſtrated, or repreſented, by the Similitude of any viſible, or conceivable Object; it muſt be confeſs'd, that the Wit of Man has not hitherto ſuggeſted any thing ſo fit, to throw Light upon that high Myſtery, as this ſuppos'd Machine; if the Author can make it good, that Nature is actually ſupported by the Agency of Matter in thoſe three Conditions of Fire, Light, and Spirit or Air. The Unity of the Machine, the Cooperation or joint Action of all the three Powers; Light the Iſſue of Fire, and yet coeval with it, returning Spirit or Air to maintain the joint Action, and by it every thing, is ſo exquiſite a Picture of what hitherto has been thought to ſurpaſs all Imagination, that if the Author can maintain that his Machine works by theſe Powers, very few will doubt of the Truth of what it was intended to repreſent.

That the Deity and the ſeveral Perſons in it are, in numberleſs Expreſſions of Scripture, uniformly repreſented by the Machine, and by theſe three Powers in it, applying the Idea of Fire to the firſt; the Idea of Light to the ſecond; and of Air or Spirit to the third, the Author endeavours to prove by a world of Quotations.

He does not forget the frequent Appearances of the Deity, in the form of Fire, often attended with Light, and Air or Cloud; he takes notice of the many Deſcriptions

tions of the firſt Perſon as terrible; a jealous God; the Avenger of Sin; a flaming, a conſuming, a devouring Fire to the Workers of Iniquity: and has collected a Liſt of the various Temples that the Heathens had, to the Sun, to Fire, or to the Heavens, under that Head or Attribute.

With reſpect to Light, he produces numerous Paſſages, where Light, repreſented or ſpoken of, ſeems properly applicable to that Perſon, who was to be the Light of the Nations, who was repreſented by Irradiation; and, perhaps, prais'd or prayed for in the Expreſſion *Hallelujah*; and who declar'd formally of himſelf, that he was the Light.

And, on this Subject, our Author has one very uncommon Reflection, as almoſt all his are; he ſays the Word כהן *Cohen*, tranſlated *Prieſt*, and to which no one has pretended to affix a determin'd Meaning, ſignifies properly an Interceſſor; and in evidence of this, he has produc'd ſeveral Texts, and particularly two, where the Children of *David* are ſaid to be his כהנים *Cohenim*, meaning Interceſſors with him, it not being poſſible they cou'd be Prieſts, ſince they were not of the Tribe of *Levi*.

After eſtabliſhing that the Word render'd Prieſt, ſignifies Interceſſor; he proceeds to obſerve, that the High Prieſt was only ſuch, and employed in offering Sacrifice, as the Repreſentative of him, concerning whom *Jehovah* ſwore, that he was a Prieſt, or Interceſſor for ever, after the Order of *Melchizedek*.

And then, to make that Type or Repreſentation more entire, our Author obſerves that the High Prieſt, in Office, was to wear Garments made by divine Direction, emblematical in every particular of his Office; but more

eſpecially

eſpecially in that they were to be of white, that is Linnen, and Gold, and Purple, and Scarlet, by that Collection of Colours expreſſing Light, the Badge or Repreſentation of the ſecond Perſon of the Deity.

This, as well as the Crown that the Prieſt wore, expreſſing Irradiation, as before mention'd, our Author thinks was certainly underſtood at the Time of the Inſtitution, and by Believers down 'till the Days of our Saviour; and had it been generally then underſtood, the Nation wou'd not have rejected the Light. But as the Jewiſh People univerſally apoſtatis'd, loſt their Knowledge with their Faith, and had the Remains of it, almoſt altogether extinguiſh'd in the Captivity; they had leiſure to frame Notions of their Meſſiah, different from what the Scriptures exhibited; and in the Conſtructions of the Scriptures, which they did not underſtand, they impoſed on themſelves, and on all that truſted them.

To the Light, our Author ſhews, there were ſeveral Temples amongſt the Heathens.

Touching the third Perſon, our Author produces ſeveral Texts, where he is formally ſpoken of, under the Deſcription of רוח *Ruach, Ventus, Flatus, Spiritus*, the Spirit of *Jehovah*. And from the Heathens Religion and Opinions he obſerves, that they imputed all their Advices, from their Gods, to the Spirit, to ſome material Inſpiration or Inflation; all their Sybils, the Prieſteſſes that deliver'd their Oracles, were ſuppos'd, in effect, to be blown up, and inflated by ſome Spirit or Wind. And it may be conſider'd, whether it is of any conſequence, and of what, that they deliver'd their Anſwers from Tripodes.

But

But not to purſue, at any greater length, the numerous and the various Authorities that our Author brings together to ſupport his Argument, it merits Reflection, that when our Saviour ſpeaks of himſelf, as the Light; and when he and his Apoſtles deliver the Doctrine of the Trinity in the New Teſtament, they ſpeak of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, without any Apology or Explication, as a Matter very well known and underſtood by ſuch as underſtood the Scriptures; a thing, which it ſeems altogether impoſſible they cou'd have fallen into, if they had not known that ſuch, as really knew the Scriptures, underſtood them; as our Saviour ſays, on other Occaſions, *Matthew* xi. 15. *He that hath Ears to hear, let him hear.*

As our Author has puſh'd his Argument for the Trinity very far, from the Notion of Fire, Light, and Spirit, ſo he lays great weight on another Argument, not altogether unlike to that, drawn from the Appearance of the Cherubim, ſet up at the Expulſion of *Adam* from Paradiſe, and from the Deſcription of that Repreſentation or Appearance, drawn from the firſt and tenth Chapters of the Prophecies of *Ezekiel.*

From the Viſions of *Ezekiel* he collects, that the Form of the Cherubim was one Figure, with four Heads or Faces; the Face of an Ox, the Face of a Lyon, the Face of a Man, and the Face of an Eagle.

Had there been no more join'd but the Faces of the Ox, the Lyon, and the Eagle, as the Author can prove that the Ox repreſented Fire, the Lyon Light, and the Eagle Spirit or Air, there cou'd be no doubt, he ſays, that this wou'd have been a proper Repreſentation of the

Trinity

Trinity in the Heavens; and, by conſequence, of the inviſible Trinity by them repreſented.

But as the Face of a Man was added; join'd, as the Prophet takes notice, to the Face of the Lyon, the Repreſentative of Light, the ſecond Perſon, our Author inſiſts that this Appearance exhibited to Man, for his Comfort, juſt when for his Sin he was expell'd Paradiſe, and ſentenc'd to hard Labour, repreſented the Trinity, with the Man Chriſt Jeſus join'd to the ſecond Perſon, and was the moſt compleat Emblematical Repreſentation of what our Author ſuppoſes God reveal'd to *Adam*, when he told him, that *the Seed of the Woman ſhould bruiſe the Head of the Serpent.*

Again, this Repreſentation in the Cherubim was a thing ſo well known and underſtood by the Antients, tho' we have deſcription of it but in *Ezekiel*'s Viſion, that when the Lord commanded it to be made for the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, the Workmen made it at once, without wanting a Pattern; and our Author lays no ſmall weight on it, that Figures of theſe Cherubim (and he ſays he can ſhew why there were two of them) were, beſides the Ark of the Teſtimony, and the Mercy-Seat, the only Furniture of the moſt Holy Place; into which none but the Repreſentative of the great Interceſſor durſt ever enter; and that but once a year, cloath'd with the Emblems of his Office, and being ſanctified by Blood.

As our Author is indefatigably induſtrious in his ſearch after the true Meaning of Emblems, Inſtitutions, and Services; he is no leſs ſo, in ſettling the Meaning of Words, hitherto miſtaken, or unknown. I ſhall give you but one Inſtance.

The Word ברית *Berith*, which we always tranſlate *Covenant*, *Fœdus*, occurs in ſeveral Texts; and is generally coupled with ſuch Words, as cannot ſuffer a Man to believe that *Covenant*, *Fœdus*, is its original Signification.

The Blood of the Covenant; *the Meſſenger of the Covenant*; *I have given thee for a Covenant to the Nations*, &c. are Expreſſions that will hardly go down; and what we tranſlate *making a Covenant* כרת ברית *Karat Berith* moſt certainly ſignifies *to kill*, or *cut off Berith*; which ſhews to Conviction that *Berith* muſt, at leaſt originally, have had another Senſe than is now in the Tranſlation given it.

Our Author, ſearching to be ſatisfy'd in this Difficulty, finds two Texts, where the very ſame Letters that compoſe *Berith*, but differently pointed by the Jews, is truly tranſlated *Soap* [*Borith* as they point it] *Fullonum*; and this Word, again, confeſſedly deriv'd from ברר *Barar*, which ſignifies *to cleanſe*, *to purify*.

If then, ſays our Author, *Berith* is taken from the Idea of purifying, it muſt, and may, from the Genius of the Language, carry the Senſe of Purifier, Purification throughout.

And if it is ſo underſtood, then all the Texts, in which it occurs, will be intelligible, and determin'd to that important Senſe, in which they were written.

I have given thee for a Purifier to the Nations; *the Blood of the Purifier*; *the Meſſenger of the Purifier*; will all directly refer to the great Sacrifice, the Purification to which our Divines, without obſerving the Rules of Conſtruction, and by very hardy Figures, apply them.

And *Karat Berith* will ſignify, in its proper and primary Senſe, to cut off a, or the Purifier, and not to cut off a Covenant.

Our Author affirms, that in the Uſage of the Hebrew Tongue, nothing is more certain, or frequent, than that the Type or Emblem gets and bears the Name of the thing typified and repreſented, or principally meant; wherefore if Chriſt was the Purifier, the *Berith* promis'd, every Creature, whoſe Blood was ſhed, as repreſenting him, in Sacrifice, might have had the Name of *Berith*. And when ſuch a Creature was kill'd or cut off, as an Emblem, it was true that *Berith* was cut off or kill'd.

And as Man, entring into Covenant, that is, accepting of Terms offer'd by God for his Purification, in token of his Acceptance, was to kill, and ſhed the Blood of a Type of the great Purifier; which Blood, tho' but of the Lamb, a Type, was deem'd holy, and capable of ſanctifying and purifying the Altar, the Tabernacle, the Prieſt, and every thing that it touch'd. The ſame ſymbolical Act was repeated for confirming Pactions, Covenants, or Agreements between Men; a typical *Berith* was cut off; and over Sacrifice Men confirm'd Covenants, and accepted of the Terms propoſed by each other, as they teſtified their Engagements to God, and their Faith that he was bound to them, by the ſame typical Repreſentation.

Nor will this Conſtruction appear ſtrange to thoſe, who reflect that, in the Latin Tongue, *percutere*, *icere*, and *ferire Fœdus*, are the Terms us'd for making a Covenant or Alliance; in reſpect to which, the Etymologiſts ſatisfy themſelves with ſaying, that ſlaying ſome

Animal in Sacrifice, being a Solemnity that attended all Alliances; at the making whereof, the Parties were willing to intimate, by the Death of the Victim, the Puniſhment they thus conſented to be bound to, if they violated the Agreement; the Words *ferire Fœdus* were brought to be expreſſive of the End or Purpoſe, for which ſuch Animals were ſlain at Treaties and Alliances; and they ſuppoſe that *Fœdus* may have been the antient Tuſcan Word for *Hœdus, a Kid.*

But if they will depart from Suppoſitions, without any proof, and mount a little higher in their Antiquity; if they will admit, what our Author thinks he has prov'd, that all the religious Services of the Heathens were taken from the Inſtitutions and Appointments in the Service of the living God; tho' by length of Time, change of Language, and Imaginations; when Men, having loſt true Knowledge, began to imagine, they were miſapply'd; and, in part, alter'd: They will find Reaſon to believe that, even amongſt the Heathens, Sacrifice, as the higheſt and moſt important Act of their Religious Worſhip, was adhibited to Covenants, as an Appeal to their Deities; and putting all they expected, from that Symbol of their Religion, on the Iſſue of their faithful Performance of their Engagements.

In the Hebrew Language, the ſame Word אשם *Aſhem* ſignifies *Sin*, and a *Sin-Offering*, a Kid, Lamb, or any other thing offer'd for Sin; and the Heathens made it a Name or Attribute of one of their *Elohim.*

It does not appear, ſo far as I know, that *Fœdus*, in the antient Tuſcan, was written for *Hœdus*; but it does appear, that the Latin has an Adjective of the ſame Letters

Fœdus, a, um, which ſignifies *vile, unclean, abominable,* and *polluted.* Now if with them, at the firſt Formation of their Language, an Offering for Sin or Pollution cou'd be call'd Sin or Pollution, as in Hebrew a Kid or Lamb offer'd for אשם *Aſhem* is call'd *Aſhem*; I ſee no Reaſon to doubt, that every Offering for Sin or Pollution might be call'd *Fœdus,* or *Fœdum,* in the Senſe of that Word Adjective; and that therefore *ferire Fœdus,* in its proper and primitive Senſe, was *to kill,* or *ſacrifice a Sin-Offering.*

But be this as it will, our Author diſcovers ſeveral Temples, amongſt the Heathens, to *Berith,* and to *Baal Berith,* by which he ſays is meant the Lord, the Purifier, the early Heathens having by no Means loſt the Idea, or the Expectation of a Purification.

And he ſays that Salt, a neceſſary Ingredient in all Sacrifice, was adhibited and requir'd in this view only, as an Emblem of Purification; Salt being one of the moſt powerful Purifiers known; and of approved uſe in purging and purifying moſt Sorts of Metals from their Earth, and baſe Droſs that cloſely adheres to them.

When Freethinkers object to the Evidence, drawn from Prophecies and prophetical Inſtitutions, for ſupporting the Chriſtian Religion, that it is ambiguous and uncertain; the Prophecies being dark and obſcure, capable often of a double Meaning; and the Inſtitutions being Figurative and Typical, applicable only, *ex poſt facto,* by a compariſon of the Figures with the Events; and therefore not fit to communicate, with any certainty, to thoſe to whom the Revelation was made, the Knowledge of the Event, which they were to expect, and in which

which they were to believe: The common Anſwer is; that we are not, from our narrow Views, and with our dim Lights, to examine and to find fault with the Diſpoſition of the infinitely-wiſe Being, purely, becauſe we cannot aſſign Reaſons, that to us ſeem adequate, for the Conduct he has been pleas'd to hold; that it has pleas'd God to convey ſuch Intimations of the then future Advent of the Meſſiah to the Iſraelites, in the Law, and by the Prophets, as were, when the Event prefigur'd happen'd, full and diſtinct proof, that Jeſus was the Perſon intended; and the Syſtem of Religion, deliver'd by him, the future Law and Faith to which all Mankind was to be ſubject; and that, theſe things being admitted, it is preſumptuous to enquire why the Deity, in infinite Wiſdom, thought fit to convey this Knowledge, and theſe Intimations in Prophecies and Inſtitutions, which, at the Beginning, and before the Advent of our Saviour, were wrapt up deſignedly in Myſtery and Figures. And ſome People even venture to gueſs at probable Cauſes, for the delivering and keeping this Knowledge in this Manner, 'till after our Saviour's Paſſion.

But, if our Author's Scheme for interpreting the Scriptures is true, the whole Objection falls at once to the Ground; becauſe theſe Emblems and Figures, as well as many Expreſſions call'd figurative, tho' dark, obſcure, and uncertain to us (who have loſt the Knowledge of the Language, as well as of the Emblems) yet were not ſo to them, to whom the Revelation was made; and who, by thoſe Emblems, and by that Language, underſtood as clearly what was foretold to happen, at the diſtance of many Centuries, and therefore as diſtinctly believ'd in

in it; as we, at the diſtance of ſo many Ages after the Event, upon the Relation in a Language we underſtand, know and believe that Jeſus actually came, and fulfilled the Will of God, and the Predictions concerning him.

And, if this be ſo, it will be eaſily underſtood, why the Faith of *Abraham* and others, who preceded the Days of our Saviour, is ſo highly commended by St. *Paul.*

If the Iſraelites, to whom the Law was deliver'd, underſtood the Language, the Inſtitutions, the Emblems, as our Author does, they certainly muſt have known that, in due time, God intended to ſend a Meſſiah to the World, under the ſuffering Character that Jeſus bore; and they muſt have believ'd it wou'd be ſo, becauſe of the Marks of Divinity attending the Revelation, which they were Eye-witneſſes to. The Language, in which we are told of that Event after it happen'd, is no more preciſe and diſtinct than that, formerly uſed, was to them; and if we have not ſeen the Miracles with our own Eyes, we ſee thoſe Prophecies deliver'd to them; and have authentic Records of the Completion of them; which does no more than put us on a level with them, in point of Evidence, or cauſe of Belief.

They, indeed, at the Publication of the Law cou'd not tell (ſo far as we ſee) how many Ages, or Years, the Event was diſtant; as we, who have come after it, can. But when the Advent became nearer, and when the Impreſſion of the firſt Revelation became fainter, in the Days of *Daniel*, they were brought more upon a level with us, even in that reſpect; and were told, to a day, when they were to look for the Completion of their Hopes.

It

It is not to be denied that this Revelation, however clear in it's ſelf, became obſcure, before the coming of the Meſſiah; the Means, by which this was brought about, our Author has explain'd; and very noble Ends may be aſſign'd, for which it may have been permitted to be ſo, by the divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs; without impeaching the certainty of the Proof of the Chriſtian Religion from Prophecies and Prophetick Inſtitutions; and without ſuffering the divine Goodneſs to lie under the Imputation that wou'd attend the Suppoſition, that the Revelation of God was not full, and compleat to Mankind, and did not inſtruct them ſufficiently for their Conduct, their Faith, and their Comfort.

I have ſelected theſe few hints from amidſt an Infinity of other very various Obſervations and Diſcoveries, which the Author has, without ſeeming very ſolicitous about what is call'd Method or Order, brought together. And I have ranged them in ſuch Order, as ſeem'd to me the moſt proper to let you eaſily into the Author's Sentiments, ſo far as I underſtand them.

If YOUR LORDSHIP will judge of them fairly, and after due Examination, you muſt enquire after them in the Original; where you will find many Proofs and Arguments that my Meaſure of ſearching does not ſufficiently come up to, employ'd for illuſtrating each Particular, beſides what I have curſorily ſtated in theſe Pages.

I have loſt my Labour, if YOUR LORDSHIP does not think theſe Matters highly worth looking into; and, from your Learning and Candor, I promiſe my ſelf that if you do, thoſe, who are in the ſame low Rank of Learning with me, will have great Obligations to you for letting them

them know how they are to form their Judgment upon Matters, that ſeem to concern them and Mankind ſo much.

In the Treatiſe laſt publiſh'd *Of Power Eſſential and Mechanical*, our Author, amongſt other very curious and ſurpriſing things, undertakes to confute Sir *I*-- *N*--'s Principles of Gravity, Attraction, Infinite Vacuity, and Projection, which, he ſays, are not only unmechanical, but contradictory to the Nature and Idea of material Subſtance, and impoſſible and abſurd. And he pretends to prove, by different Editions of Sir *I*--'s Works, and from different Paſſages in them, that he has at different Times varied and changed his own Opinions; and, in effect, as our Author calls it, given up his own Principles, which are untenible. In this laſt Treatiſe our Author mixes, with his Reflections againſt Sir *I*--- and the late Dr. *C*---, a degree of Bitterneſs and Severity that muſt be diſagreeable to many, and which nothing can excuſe, but a Zeal for the Honour of Religion, which in him ſeems to be very ſtrong and ſincere.

I am, MY LORD,

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

YOUR LORDSHIP's

Moſt Obedient,

Humble Servant.